



# **Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

2300 Lake Elmo Drive  
Billings, MT 59105

## **NOTICE OF DECISION**

for

Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone FAS

April 5, 2010

TO: Environmental Quality Council  
Director's Office, Dept. of Environmental Quality  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks\*

Director's Office	Lands Section
Parks Division	Design & Construction
Fisheries Division	Legal Unit
Wildlife Division	Regional Supervisors

Mike Volesky, Governor's Office \*  
Sarah Elliott, Press Agent, Governor's Office\*  
Maureen Theisen, Governor's Office\*  
Montana Historical Society, State Preservation Office  
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council  
Montana Wildlife Federation  
Montana State Library  
George Ochenski  
Montana Environmental Information Center  
Wayne Hirst, Montana State Parks Foundation  
FWP Commissioner Shane Colton\*  
Montana Parks Association/Our Montana (land acquisition projects)  
Richard Moore, DNRC Area Manager, Southern Land Office  
County Commissioners  
Other Local Interested People or Groups  
\* (Sent electronically)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

A Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for farming/vegetation treatment activities planned for the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone Fishing Access Site (CFYFAS), a 172-acre property on the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River located approximately 2 miles south of Bridger, Montana, including approximately 1 mile of the Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River shoreline and associated landscapes.

The draft EA was circulated for public comment for 30 days, ending on March 9, 2010. Legal and/or public notices were published in the Billings Gazette, the Carbon County News, and the MFWP Website. A summary of the single public comment and our response is attached.

After review of the very limited public comment (only one comment was received), it is my recommendation to accept Alternative 'B', the preferred alternative, which is to create the opportunity to conduct farming and/or other vegetative treatments on the CFYFAS. This EA will cover those activities for the next 5 years.

We will work with the Carbon County Weed District, any private contractors that we may use for farming purposes, our neighbors and our own staff to responsibly manage for noxious weeds and to maintain healthy and appropriate vegetation on this site.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Habermann", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Doug Habermann  
Regional Parks Manager

Enclosure

## **EA PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY**

- **Public comment period:** February 10-March 9, 2010
- **Public notices** were placed on the FWP website, and were published in the Billings Gazette and the Stillwater County News.
- **A total of 1 comment** was received. That comment was offered by a neighbor who was concerned about the source of irrigation water for the 28 acres proposed for treatment.

### **Comment Summary**

- Karl Graham telephoned, and was concerned about the source of irrigation water for the 28 acres proposed for treatment.

### **Response to Public Comment**

- **What will be the source of irrigation water for the project, and will FWP recognize the importance of maintaining pond water on his adjacent property to benefit waterfowl even though FWP has a legal water right from that impounded source?**

The 28 acres under consideration will be irrigated from the Sand Creek Canal and not from Mr. Graham's pond. Future farming operations on acreage lying adjacent to the aforementioned property will recognize the significance of his existing waterfowl development while retaining FWPs existing water right from that source for possible use in the future. Regional Parks Manager Doug Habermann and Regional Supervisor Gary Hammond contacted Mr. Graham on 3/31/2010 via telephone and discussed our plans for the FAS, and agreed on the need to cooperate as neighbors as we proceed with vegetation/management activities including weed control.